



IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for forming a thin film, wherein a film-forming gas is supplied from a gas supplying device to a vacuum container which can be evacuated by an exhausting device to reduce gas pressure in the container, an electric power is applied from a power applying device to the film-forming gas to produce plasma from the gas in which a thin film is formed on an article to be film-covered disposed on a supporting member in the vacuum container, the gas supplying device including a gas supply member having a hollow plate member with a gas supply surface portion and a cover air-tightly covering the hollow plate member opposite the gas supply surface portion, the gas supply surface portion being opposed to a film-forming surface of the article to be film-covered disposed on the supporting member in the vacuum container, the power applying device including a power applying electrode connected to a power source for forming the plasma and disposed in the vacuum container, the gas supply member being disposed in the vacuum container without connection to the power source ~~and having a plurality of gas supply holes dispersedly formed at the gas supply surface portion~~, the supporting member being grounded, the power applying electrode being disposed in a surrounding region around a space between the article to be film-covered disposed on the supporting member in the vacuum container and the gas supply surface portion of the gas supply member opposed to the article,

wherein the exhausting device discharges a gas from a region in a vicinity of a periphery portion of the gas supply member ~~and~~,

wherein the power applying device includes four divided electrodes as the power applying electrode for applying the electric power and high frequency power sources each connected to the divided electrodes, respectively, each of the four divided electrodes is in a shape of a bent plate forming two electrode sections integrally connected substantially perpendicularly to each other, the divided electrodes being disposed in a quadrilateral shape in a plan view surrounding the space between the article to be film-covered in the vacuum

container and the gas supply surface portion of the gas supply member opposed to the article, each divided electrode disposed adjacent an inner surface of vacuum container such that at least the gas supply member, the article to be film-covered and the supporting member are disposed internally of the quadrilateral shape, and

wherein the hollow plate member defines a hollow internal space formed therein with a first plurality of gas supply holes formed in the gas supply surface portion in fluid communication with the hollow internal space of the hollow plate member, the cover forming an air-tight gas-receiving compartment with a second plurality of gas supply holes extending through the hollow plate member, formed in the gas supply surface portion and in fluid communication with the gas-receiving compartment but in fluid isolation from the hollow internal space of the hollow plate member such that the film-forming gas is supplied to the hollow internal space of the hollow plate member via a first gas guide duct and the film-forming gas is supplied to the gas-receiving compartment via a second gas guide duct being independent of the first gas guide duct, both the film-forming gas supplied to the hollow internal space of the hollow plate member via the first gas guide duct and the film-forming gas supplied to the gas-receiving compartment via the second gas guide duct are dispersed into the space between the article to be film-covered and the gas supply surface portion of the gas supply member opposed to the article as the film-forming gases exit respective ones of the first and second plurality of gas supply holes formed in the gas supply surface portion independently of each other.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein distribution density of the gas supply holes in the gas supply surface portion of the gas supply member and area of opening of the holes are determined in such a way

that amount of gas blow from the gas supply surface portion is varied from a peripheral region to a central region of the gas supply surface portion.

5. - 15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a driving device disposed at least partially within the vacuum container and connected to the supporting member, the driving device operative to move the supporting member either towards or away from the gas supply surface portion of the gas supply member.